Pathways to Careers in Communication

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Pathways to Careers in Communication

INTRODUCTION

Choosing the best educational path to a satisfying job and successful career can be difficult for a student. The choice is a serious one. The pathway you choose and the decisions you make will profoundly shape your future. This booklet is designed to help you make that difficult choice by providing clear information about communication education and possible related jobs and careers.

Students frequently ask: "What is communication and what can I do with a communication degree? What kind of job can a communication major get and how do I choose the right school?" If you are asking any of these questions, the table of contents is designed to take you directly to the answer. The academic discipline of communication is described on pages 5-6. Then a variety of career possibilities for people with a communication degree are outlined on pages 9-10. More information can be found in a list of electronic and printed resources starting on page 10-17.

What can you do with a communication degree?

Sixth edition
Edited by Sherwyn Morreale, Ph.D., and Julie A. Westphal

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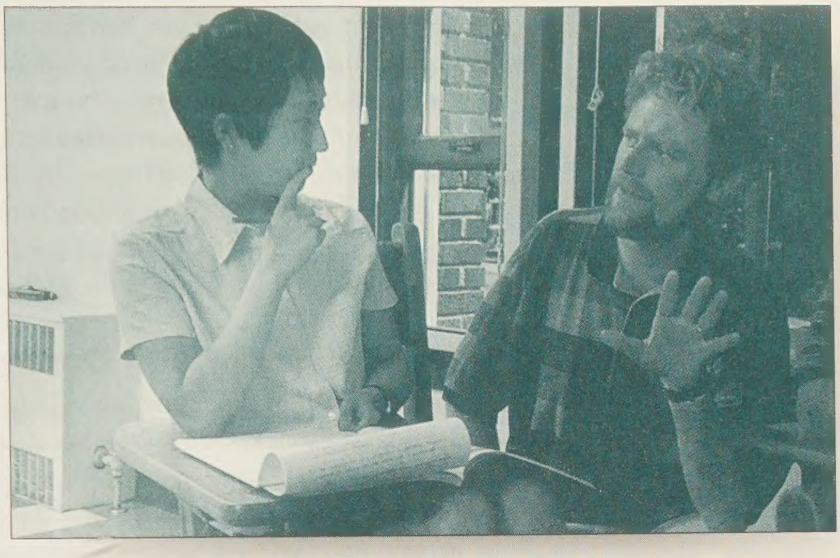
A DESCRIPTION OF COMMUNICATION

What is Communication?



Communication is a learned skill. Most people are born with the physical ability to talk, but we must learn to speak well and communicate effectively. Speaking, listening, and our ability to understand verbal and nonverbal meanings are skills we develop in various ways. We learn basic communication skills by observing other people and modeling our behaviors based on what we see.

Communication as an academic discipline relates to all the ways we communicate, so it embraces a large body of study and knowledge. The communication discipline includes both verbal and nonverbal messages. A body of scholarship all about communication is presented and explained in textbooks, electronic publications, and academic journals. In the journals, researchers report the results of studies that are the basis for an ever-expanding understanding of how we all communicate.

Communication teachers and scholars, in 1995, developed a definition of the field of communication to clarify it as a discipline for the public. That definition is now used by the U.S. Department of Education in its national publication, *Classification of Instructional Programs, 2000:*

The field of communication focuses on how people use messages to generate meanings within and across various contexts, cultures, channels, and media. The field promotes the effective and ethical practice of human communication.[1]

Why is Communication Important?

Oral communication has long been our primary method for communicating with one another. It is estimated that 75% of a person's day is spent communicating in some way. A majority of this communication time may be spent speaking and listening, while a minority of that time is spent reading and writing. Good communication skills will help to foster personal, academic, and professional success.

The National Communication Association has collected and annotated nearly 100 articles, commentaries, and publications, which call attention to the importance of the study of communication in contemporary society. Themes in the bibliography provide support for the importance of communication education to: the development of the whole person; the improvement of the educational enterprise; being a responsible citizen of the world, both socially and culturally; and, succeeding in one's career and in the business enterprise.[2]

The Wall Street Journal reported the findings of a survey of 480 companies that found that employers ranked communication abilities first among the desirable personal qualities of future employees.[3] In a report on fastest growing careers, the U.S. Department of Labor states

that communication skills will be in demand across occupations well into the 21st century.[4] In a national survey of 1000 human resource managers, oral communication skills are identified as valuable for both obtaining employment and successful job performance.[5] Executives with Fortune 500 companies indicate that college students need better communication skills, as well as the ability to work in teams and with people from diverse backgrounds.[6] In a national article, The Scientist, author Jim Richman says that "If I ever give any advice, it is that you can never do enough training around your overall communication skills. It really adds tremendous value back to you." [7] And, when 1000 faculty members from a cross section of disciplines were asked to identify basic competencies for every college graduate, skills in communicating topped the list.[8] An economics professor states that, ". . . we are living in a communications revolution comparable to the invention of printing . . . In an age of increasing talk, it's wiser talk we need most. Communication studies might well be central to colleges and universities in the 21st century." [9]

History of the Communication Discipline

The communication discipline has a long history of accomplishments, dating back for ages. According to a well known communication scholar and educator:

> The ability to speak clearly, eloquently, and effectively has been recognized as the hallmark of an educated person since the beginning of recorded history. Systematic comment on communication goes back at least as far as *The Precepts of Kagemni and Ptah -Hopte* (3200-2800 B.C.). Under the label "rhetoric," the study of the theory and practice of communication was a central concern of Greek, Roman, medieval, Renaissance, and early modern education. In the United States, rhetorical training has been a part of formal education since Harvard's founding in 1636.[10]

Today, communication and its study are especially relevant. In the 21st century, contemporary society is increasingly diverse and communication is more complex. Modern day communication studies are keeping up with and, in most cases, staying ahead of the curve. Educators and researchers in the discipline are focusing their work and their courses on the challenges of communicating in a diverse and often computer-mediated society. Many also are stressing the role of communication and citizenship in a civil and democratic society. Frequently, the communication discipline is referred to as the "engaged discipline," as a result of teachers' and students' participation in service learning projects and researchers concern for community-based research on critical social issues.[11]

What was once seen as the field of speech and rhetoric is now the discipline of communication that includes communication in the workplace, within families, the mass media, and in advertising, to name a few. Contemporary students draw on communication theories and practices as well as those common in the fields of anthropology, psychology, sociology, linguistics, semiotics, and rhetoric. Students in broadcast communication make use of work in computer engineering for web development and streaming audio and video. Communication as a discipline now includes interpersonal, small group, organizational, intercultural and international, public, mass, and mediated communication. The study of communication considers how people communicate as individuals, in society, and in various cultures.

Table 1

U. S. Department of Education Classification of Instruction Programs — 2000

Series on Communication, Journalism, and Related Fields

COMMUNICATION, JOURNALISM, AND RELATED PROGRAMS

- **Communication and Media Studies**
  - Communication Studies/Speech Communication and Rhetoric
  - Communication/Media Studies
  - Communication and Media Studies, Other
- **Advertising, Public Relations, and Organizational Communication**
  - Advertising
    - Business Marketing and Marketing Management
    - Marketing Research
    - International Business Marketing
  - Public Relations/Image Management
  - Business/Organizational Communication
    - Agricultural Communications
    - Family and Consumer Sciences/Human Sciences Communications
  - Political Communication
  - Health Communication
  - Advertising, Public Relations, and Organizational Communication, Other
- **Journalism**
  - Journalism
  - Broadcast Journalism
  - Journalism, Other

MEDIATED AND TELECOMMUNICATION

- **Computer and Information Sciences and Support Services**
  - Radio and Television
    - Film/Video and Photographic Arts
    - Radio and Television Broadcast Technology
    - Recording Arts Technology
  - Digital Communication and Media
- **Communication, Journalism, and Related Fields, Other**
  - Communication, Journalism, and Related Fields, Other

Areas of Concentration in the Communication Discipline

Many subject matters are encompassed in the study of communication as indicated in Table 1. While areas of emphasis differ from one school to another, some of the most common include:

Applied Communication: The study of process used to analyze communication needs of organizations and social interaction, including the design of training to improve communication between supervisors and employees.

Communication Education: The study of communication in the classroom and other pedagogical contexts.

Communication Theory: The study of principles that account for the impact of communication in human social interaction.

Electronic Media: The study of radio, television, media technology, and web design with streaming audio and video.

Family Communication: The study of communication unique to family systems.

Gender Communication: The study of gender and sex differences and similarities in communication and the unique characteristics of male-female communication.

Health Communication: The study of communication as it relates to health professionals and health education, including the study of provider-client interaction as well as the diffusion of health information through public health campaigns.

International and Intercultural Communication: The study of communication among individuals of different cultural backgrounds, including the study of similarities and differences across cultures.

Interpersonal Communication: The study of communication behaviors in dyads (pairs) and their impact on personal relationships.

Language and Social Interaction: The study of the structure of verbal and nonverbal behaviors occurring in social interaction.

Legal Communication: The study of the role of communication as it relates to the legal system.

Mass Communication and Media Literacy: The study of the uses, processes, and effects of mediated communication.

Mediation and Dispute Resolution: The study of understanding, management, and resolution of conflict within intrapersonal, interpersonal, and intergroup situations.

Organizational Communication: The study of processes used to analyze communication needs of organizations and social interaction, including the design of training to improve communication between supervisors and employees.

Performance Studies: The study of components, such as performer(s), text, audience, and context within the communication discipline

Political Communication: The study of the role that communication plays in political systems.

Public Address: The study of speakers and speeches, including the historical and social context of platforms, campaigns, and movements.

Public Relations: The study of the management of communication between an organization and its audiences.

Rhetorical Criticism: The study of principles that account for the impact of human communication between speaker and audience.

Semiotics: The use of verbal and nonverbal symbols and signs in human communication.

Small Group Communication: The study of communication systems among three or more individuals who interact around a common purpose and who influence one another.

Speech Communication: The study of the nature, processes, and effects of human symbolic interaction. While speech is the most obvious mode of communication, human symbolic interaction includes a variety of verbal and nonverbal codes.

Theatre and Drama: The study and production of dramatic literature.

Visual Communication: The study of visual data, such as architecture, photography, visual art, advertising, film, and television as it relates to communication.

COMMUNICATION AS AN ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE

Growth of the Discipline of Communication

Instruction in communication is widely available in the United States and is growing rapidly in Canada and in other countries. According to the Department of Education's Center on Educational Statistics, the communication discipline in higher education shows approximately 57,000 communication majors pursuing undergraduate degrees and 6,000 seeking graduate degrees in communication.[12]

Depending on the school, you can earn: a certificate of proficiency, associate degree, bachelor of arts and science, masters of arts and science, and/or a doctor of philosophy or education. The number of undergraduate and graduate communication degrees conferred on students has been rising steadily throughout the 20th century and into the 21st century, as Table 2 indicates.

Departmental Approaches to the Study of Communication

Communication departments vary from school to school in focus, courses offered, and types of programs and degrees available. Table 3 shows the areas of study within communication for which degrees were conferred in 1999.

Some schools offer degrees in specific areas of communication such as advertising, communication education, journalism, organizational communication, public relations, radio-TV-film, or theatre. At such schools you would receive, for example, a B.A. in advertising.

Some colleges offer a communication degree with an emphasis, concentration, or track in a specific area such as interpersonal communication, mass communication, public relations, or rhetoric. At such institutions you would receive, for example, a B.A. in communication with an emphasis in public relations.

Some schools offer a communication degree without a particular emphasis. At such colleges you would receive a B.A. in communication.

Some community colleges offer associate degrees in communication. These schools would grant, for example, an A.A. degree in communication.

Table 2

Earned Degrees in Communication by Level of Degree and Gender (1970-2000)

	Bachelor's Degrees			Master's Degrees			Doctor's Degrees		
YEAR	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
1970-1971	10,802	6,989	3,813	1,856	1,214	642	145	126	19
1975-1976	21,282	12,458	8,824	3,126	1,818	1,308	204	154	50
1980-1981	31,282	14,179	17,103	3,105	1,448	1,657	182	107	75
1985-1986	43,076	17,639	25,437	3,823	1,610	2,213	223	116	107
1990-1991	52,773	20,645	32,128	4,336	1,711	2,625	274	151	123
1995-1996	48,003	19,760	28,243	5,604	2,171	3,433	345	190	155
1999-2000	56,910	22,063	34,847	5,605	2,059	3,456	357	168	189

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Higher Education General Information Survey and Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System only include colleges that did award degrees in the given academic year.

Some schools don't offer a degree in communication but do offer one or more courses. At these institutions, you would receive a degree in another major but have communication courses as part of the units taken. For example, you might obtain a B.S. in psychology, with courses in communication (possibly a minor).

Departments of communication also may differ according to the theoretical approach and research methods they favor. They may emphasize rhetorical, critical, interpretive, scientific, applied, and/or performance perspectives.

Undergraduate programs at most schools do not always offer all possible courses or majors in all areas of communication. Universities generally specialize in one or perhaps several areas

of study under the broad umbrella of the communication discipline.

Surveys conducted by the Department of Education identify over 1200 colleges and universities that offer communication courses, many of which also offer a major in communication. The National Center for Education Statistics offers a complete list of these colleges with direct links to each of them through IPEDS College Opportunities On-Line at http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cool/InstList.asp.

Trends change in undergraduate and graduate education within the communication discipline by gender, type of degree, and area of study, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Degrees in Communication by Area of Study in the Discipline (1998-1999)

Area of Study	Bachelor's degrees Requiring 4 or 5 years			Master's degrees			Doctoral Degrees (Ph.D.,Ed.D.,etc)		
YEAR	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Communication Total	51,384	20,298	31,086	5,293	1,847	3,446	347	181	166
Communication general	24,743	9,474	15,269	2,168	724	1,444	220	117	103
Advertising	2,847	1,058	1,789	208	78	130	5	3	2
Journalism	9,141	3,284	5,857	1,256	407	849	32	17	15
Broadcast journalism	622	250	372	22	5	17	0	0	0
Public Relations and Organizational communication	2,714	722	1,942	225	46	179	0	0	0
Radio and Television Broadcast	5,413	2,933	2,480	308	136	172	11	3	8
Communication other	5,904	2,527	3,377	1,106	451	655	79	41	38

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Higher Education General Information Survey and Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System only includes colleges that awarded degrees in that academic year.

Unit Designations

In reviewing school catalogues, you'll notice that not all colleges and universities use the same title for listing their communication programs. Some communication offerings are listed as part of a school or college (e.g., School of Communication, College of Communication). Some institutions will offer communication courses through departments with such titles as Communication Studies, Speech Communication, Communication Arts, Communication and Theatre, and Speech and Mass Communication. Some schools merge communication offerings with other academic areas, and designate the grouping with such names as Humanities or Language Arts (e.g., Division of Humanities, Language Arts Program).

Special Departmental Services

Some departments offer activities and services in addition to their academic courses. These offerings include intercollegiate speech and debate competitions; communication clubs and honor societies; opportunities for participation in on-campus radio, television stations, and theatres; and off-campus experiential training, often in service learning programs.

Communication clubs allow those who have similar interests in the field to meet, have social interactions, go on field trips, meet with professors, interact with practitioners, and participate in activities of mutual concern. National Communication Association Student Clubs (NCASC) are official units associated with the National Communication Association.

Forensics and debate offer opportunities for those interested in practicing how to speak well publicly and argue persuasively. These skills are essential to many professions, and valuable for entering fields such as law, theatre, and teaching.

Honor societies award special recognition to students who have achieved high academic levels in the discipline. Lambda Pi Eta is the accredited undergraduate communication honor society of the National Communication Association for students at four-year colleges and universities. Sigma Chi Eta is the honor society for students at two-year schools. Membership in either society is not only a means of gaining recognition for communication expertise; it also can be included on a résumé, which allows prospective employers to know that you are a respected member of the academic community. Complete details on Lambda Pi Eta and Sigma Chi Eta are available on the NCA website at www.natcom.org/studentorgs.

Internships can be an important stepping-stone on the pathway to a career in communication. Internships are paid or unpaid positions within a company or organization that are arranged for a fixed period of time and may be assigned college credit. Because the communication discipline is so broad, an internship in communication can help you explore an area of interest. It is also a way to show a future employer that you have obtained on-the-job skills. For example, someone interested in a career in political communication may participate in a candidate's campaign, or a public relations major may spend a period of time working in a public relations agency. If you declare communication as your major, consult with your advisor or the head of the department about internship opportunities. Internships are available in other academic disciplines, but the relationship between interning and the communication discipline is particularly close. In recent years, internships for communication students have been enhanced with course-based service-learning experiences.13 In such courses, students are given the opportunity to apply what they are learning in community settings where their work benefits others and society. Communication theory and skills are a natural fit with internships and service-learning courses.

Student-operated radio stations, television stations, and theatres are available on many campuses. These activities allow a student interested in the discipline to gain practical experience.

COMMUNICATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Undergraduate Education

Post-secondary education in communication is offered at technical schools, community colleges, colleges, and universities. Cost and program content are usually the most important factors involved in choosing a school for undergraduate studies.

Two considerations in selecting a school are whether or not it offers course work in your area of interest, and the quality of those offerings. Do not assume that all colleges and universities offer communication majors. Research is needed to determine the breadth and quality of various programs. Referring to a source such as *Peterson's Guide to Four-Year Colleges*[14] should help assist in your search. You may also consider setting up on-campus interviews with counselors and members of the communication department.

Another consideration may be the cost comparison among schools. Be aware that tuition at a public college or university in your state of residence tends to be less expensive than at out-of-state schools. Private colleges and universities tend to be more expensive than public schools; however, many private institutions offer scholarships and grants, which may balance out the cost differences.

If there is a community college in your area, it can also be part of your pathway to a degree as it may grant an associate degree in communication, or offer a substantial number of courses in the discipline. If you attend a community college as a route to a B.A. degree, be sure that your credit hours will transfer to the school that you plan to attend later. To conserve finances, you may also consider technical institutions. Only a few of these institutions offer programs in communication. Those that offer such programs favor technical training in such fields as media technology and electronic communication.

Scholarships, grants, and student loans are available. For more information regarding tuition assistance, contact the financial aid office at the college or university you are considering, or collect information from school career centers or the reference section of a library.

Graduate Education

Graduate school might be an option if you're interested in acquiring additional knowledge and skills in communication beyond the undergraduate level. Selecting a graduate school requires forethought and research to determine which of the masters and doctorates offered at institutions across the country is best for you.

Often graduate students in communication are interested in pursuing a career in college teaching and research. With the exception of some community colleges and private schools, a Ph.D. is usually preferred, if not required, for employment as an instructor or professor. An advanced communication degree is also valuable for persons interested in working for public or

private organizations outside of academia. For example, a master's degree in organizational communication might lead to a career in management or in human resources training.

Graduate level courses vary from school to school, just as at the undergraduate level. Contact schools you are interested in attending and request information regarding majors and/or fields of study that are offered. You can also consult such sources as: *NCA Directory of Graduate Programs*[15], *Journalism and Mass Communication Directory*[16], *and Peterson's Guides to Graduate and Professional Programs: An Overview*[17].

After narrowing your list of prospective graduate schools, the next step is to contact the schools that interest you and request a copy of their graduate program guide, or review their program on their website. Analyze each department's course offerings, any financial assistance that is available, and job placement trends for recent graduates in your desired area of concentration. A section of the NCA website (www.natcom.org/ComProg/GPDHTM/Scripts/reputationstudy) provides ranking information about graduate programs on the various concentrations in the discipline. Seek recommendations from professors or other experts in the discipline or research the publication record of faculty members on the staff of prospective schools. To gain some perspective on the graduate program at prospective schools, you should also try to contact some of the current graduate students to hear what their experiences have been.

In planning for graduate education, whether at the master's or doctoral level, be aware that many schools give stipends and/or a waiver of tuition for being a graduate, research, or teaching assistant. Graduate assistants aid professors in their research projects, coach forensics/debate teams, or assist in departmental projects. Research assistants help professors pursue inquiry into one of the areas of communication. Teaching assistants instruct in basic communication courses, usually under the supervision of a full-time faculty member. These assistantships relieve some of the educational costs and also provide valuable experience for post-graduate work.

COMMUNICATION AND CAREERS

Careers in the Field of Communication

When investigating a future career in communication, it is important to know the possible positions available in the field, potential career opportunities, and educational offerings available at the school you choose. Not all colleges and universities offer all of the subjects listed for each career area. In addition, many colleges have general education requirements (that all students must take, regardless of major), which may prevent a student from taking all of the subjects listed.

ADVERTISING

Obtaining a degree in advertising includes learning about the research involved in developing advertising strategies, how advertising campaigns are produced, how marketing plays into advertising, and, of course, essential computer skills.

According to Bruce Vandenburg of Michigan State University, "Advertising requires the ability to communicate clearly and with energy and imagination. You have to be interesting and enthusiastic to convince people that you mean what you say or write. This applies

regardless of what area of advertising you choose to pursue. You can accomplish this by being well educated and pursuing interesting life experiences."[18]

Vandenburg projected that advertising will be one of the top growth career areas for the 21st century. There should be a high demand for new graduates. This growth appears to be based on the role of advertising as it relates to new electronic, computer-based technologies, including the Internet and CD-ROMs.

Advertising programs are typically housed with journalism or mass communication departments, although they may be a part of a communication or business program.

Careers in advertising include: advertising or marketing specialist, copy writer, account executive, sales manager, media planner, media buyer, creative director, media sales representative, and public opinion researcher.

Communication subjects that can enhance an advertising career include: marketing, copy writing, research methods, persuasion, advertising, mass media, interpersonal communication, mass media law, media production, public speaking, and small group communication.

COMMUNICATION EDUCATION

Communication educators are hired at all educational levels—elementary and secondary schools, community colleges, colleges, and universities. Most communication faculty members are found at the collegiate level.

To teach communication in an elementary or secondary school you need to obtain certification. Each state has its own regulations, but almost all require a minimum of a bachelor's degree in the field you will be teaching.

Becoming an instructor at the college level usually requires a doctoral degree, though some community colleges will hire a candidate with a master's degree. Community colleges tend to prefer graduates who have a general communication degree so they can teach a variety of courses. Four-year institutions, especially research and graduate level universities, prefer candidates trained in a specific area, such as organizational communication, rhetoric and public address, or interpersonal communication.

One question often asked by students is, "What are the job opportunities at the college level for teaching communication?" According to Bill Eadie, Director of the School of Communication at San Diego State University, "Communication is a practical discipline, and college and university communication departments tend to hire individuals with both real-world and scholarly experience. With that in mind, consider this career path: obtain your bachelor's degree and try to work in a communication related field for several years. After getting a feel for the demands and challenges of the profession, and then entering graduate school, you will learn how to do research that will address the challenges you experienced. You will complete your doctorate with highly marketable credentials, and you will have set yourself up to become a leading member of the communication discipline."[19]

Careers in communication education include: language arts coordinator, high school speech teacher, forensics/debate coach, drama director, college or university professor, and communication department chairperson.

Communication subjects that can enhance a career in communication education include: oral communication, public speaking, interpersonal communication, introduction to media systems, communication theory, research and methodology in communication, communication in the classroom, cross-cultural communication, teaching the language arts,

"An undergraduate degree in communication is the best springboard to a teacher preparation program. Communication skills and understanding the communication process are key to good teaching and to teaching students to be good communicators."

Carolyn D. Perry
High School Teacher,
Fairfax,
Virginia Public School
System

linguistics, sociolinguistics, developmental communication, nonverbal communication, small group communication, oral interpretation and performance studies, forensics, family communication, conflict resolution, argumentation, ethics of communication, rhetorical theory and criticism, listening, discussion, and persuasion.

ELECTRONIC MEDIA/RADIO-TELEVISION/BROADCASTING/ CONVERGENCE MEDIA TECHNOLOGY

The field of broadcasting is going through a period of rapid change. One of the trends is the combination of radio and television with computers and interactivity. Even the title of the field is shifting from an emphasis on broadcasting to all electronic media and convergence technology, according to Louisa A. Nielsen of the Broadcast Education Association.[20]

"A career in communication, particularly in broadcasting, is exciting and forever challenging. The key to success is obtaining a solid foundation, which includes a degree in communication."

Rita Cosby
Senior Correspondent
FOX NEWS

It is further anticipated that there will be a major job shift in media careers, which is opening up more non-broadcast opportunities in video, audio, and web-based communication. Non-broadcast video includes the activities of corporations, health care centers, and educational organizations in producing newsletters, training materials, videos, commercials, and educational materials. Careers will encompass not only performance, but also technical skills, including video graphics and computer streaming of audio, video, still photography, and satellite communication distribution. "Students could also consider careers in media sales given that 85% of radio and television station general managers come from the ranks of account executives. Mass communication, telecommunication, public relations, and journalism students will need to be cross-trained in the use of a variety of new media in rapidly expanding non-broadcast markets, according to Allan Kennedy of Morgan State University."[21]

Often considered to be a glamour industry because of the attention given to electronic broadcasters—network newscasters and talk show hosts—the radio-television field actually has more jobs off-camera and off-microphone than on-air. Many of these technical, sales, and management positions pay as well or better than those held by performers.

Those interested in on-air performance should be aware that many of the jobs are in small or rural communities at local stations and in independent production facilities, rather than with the networks. It is fairly common for performers to find their first job at one of the small broadcasting or production sites. Initial pay is often low or even unpaid as volunteer work or internships. Even at that, competition for jobs is often high.

Undergraduate and graduate enrollments in electronic media are increasing. Electronic media/radio-television/broadcasting programs can be found in departments such as Communication, Mass Media, Mass Communication, and Radio-Television-Film.

Careers in electronic media/radio-television/broadcasting/convergence media technology include: broadcasting station general manager, program director, community relations director, video and film editor, news director, reporter, sales associate, sales manager, web designer, audience research associate, broadcast and satellite engineer, traffic/continuity specialist, media buyer, market researcher, actor, announcer, disc jockey, news anchor, public relations manager, comedy writer, casting director, producer, business manager, researcher, account executive, floor manager, and talk show host.

Communication subjects that can enhance a career in electronic media/radio-television/broadcasting include: oral communication, public speaking, print communication, interpersonal communication, introduction to mass communication, media research, studio and field production and direction for television/radio/film, script writing, editing, persuasion, nonverbal communication, media performance, oral interpretation, public relations, listening, media theory, media criticism, advertising, media law, communication ethics, campaigns, interviewing, and acting.

JOURNALISM (Print or Electronic)

Journalism involves researching and gathering information and communicating it to the public through writing, speaking, visual, or electronic means. Collegiate enrollment in journalism programs remains fairly steady. Journalism graduates typically find employment in the field soon after completing their undergraduate degree.

Careers in journalism include: reporter, editor, newscaster, author, copy writer, script writer, publisher, news service researcher, technical writer, acquisitions editor, media interviewer, and talk show host.

Communication subjects that can enhance a career in journalism include: interviewing, oral communication, public speaking, print communication, interpersonal communication, editing, persuasion, nonverbal communication, oral interpretation, listening, media theory, media criticism, advertising, media research methods, media law and ethics, acting, radio-television production, and announcing.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Public relations typically involves managing the public image of an organization or an individual. According to Carl Botan of Purdue University, "the field of public relations continues to expand at a rate few of us would have believed possible 10 or 20 years ago. The information age is turning out to be a golden age for us because: (1) new information technologies allow us to reach more audiences more quickly than ever, allowing us to practice in ways unimagined even a few years ago: and (2) globalization of the economy has increased the demand for both international and intercultural PR programs along with practitioners trained in such areas as public diplomacy, national development and nation building, and marketing."[22]

This academic major can be found in a journalism, mass communication, or communication department. It is sometimes housed in the business school.

Careers in public relations include: publicity manager, advertising manager, marketing specialist, press agent, lobbyist, corporate public affairs specialist, account executive, development officer, fund raiser, membership recruiter, sales manager, media analyst, media planner, creative director, audience analyst, news writer, and public opinion researcher.

Communication subjects that can enhance a career in public relations include: business and professional communication, public speaking, print communication, interpersonal

"Communication education – particularly classes in interpersonal, small group, and intercultural communication – is key to a successful career in the public relations field. In today's highly diverse international economy, a public relations practitioner with a communication degree is an asset to any firm."

Bonita Dostal Neff, President, Public Communication Associates

communication, introduction to media systems, organizational communication, media production, listening, interviewing, ethics of communication, persuasion, visual communication, and nonverbal communication.

THEATRE/PERFORMING ARTS/DRAMATIC ARTS

Theatre, along with mass media, is considered a glamour industry. Some individuals who are interested in entering a career in the theatre perceive it as a pathway to becoming a "star." Although stars do exist, the majority of people in the field do not reach that level. Successful careers do exist for performers who recognize that there are opportunities outside of New York and Los Angeles. There are professional, community, and educational theatres operating throughout the country.

In planning for a career in the theatre, remember that individuals who were "stars" in their community or high school productions, will be competing with others who have had similar experiences. The jobs are few, and the competition can be intense. It takes a great deal of dedication, along with talent, to become a successful performer.

When thinking about a career in drama, keep in mind that there are off-stage jobs in areas such as theatre management, instruction, and technical and production positions.

Degree programs in theatre/performing arts/dramatic arts are sometimes found in a communication department, but more often they are housed in a theatre or performing arts department. Depending on the institution, the focus of the program may include: theatre history/literature, acting, stage speech, stage movement, design, directing, makeup, costuming, theatrical/arts criticism, and theatre/stage management.

Careers in theatre/performing arts/dramatic arts include: performing artist, script writer, producer, director, arts administrator, performing arts educator, costume designer, scenic designer, lighting designer, theatre critic, makeup artist, stage manager, model, theatre professor, and casting director.

Communication subjects that can enhance a career in theatre/ performing/dramatic arts include: theatre criticism, arts management, acting, directing, lighting design, designing for the stage, costume design, theatre appreciation, history of the theatre, oral communication, public speaking, and nonverbal communication.

"Communicating about science is a key area of reform—educating scientists and engineers to communicate complex issues of science and technology to the greater public."

Judith A. Ramaley,
Assistant Director
National Science
Foundation
Education and Human
Resources Directorate

Careers in Fields Related to Communication

Knowledge of communication is beneficial to any career. If you enjoy studying communication, but do not plan on pursuing it as a career, consider taking as many communication courses as you can fit into your elective selections. If your school permits it, you might choose to double major or minor in communication. Here are just some of the career fields and occupations in which communication is essential.

BUSINESS

Communication plays a vital role in the functioning of any government, business, or industrial organization. A national study indicates that the skills most needed by a competent employee to get a job, to succeed, and be promoted are primarily communication skills.[23]

Careers in business and communication include: sales representative, executive manager, personnel manager, public information officer, industrial and labor relations representative, negotiator, director of corporate communication, customer service representative, newsletter editor, communication trainer, human resources manager, mediator, and buyer. (Also see Law, Media, and Public Relations and Advertising.)

Communication subjects that can enhance a business career include: public speaking, interpersonal communication, introduction to mass media, business and professional communication, organizational communication, small group communication, interviewing, and listening.

"The most important thing I learned in school was how to communicate...you can have brilliant ideas, but if you can't get them across, your brains wont get you anywhere."

Lee Iacocca
Former Chairman and
Chief Executive Officer
Chrysler Corporation

EDUCATION

A teacher of any subject has to effectively organize and deliver material to students. Communication skills are necessary to facilitate understanding no matter whether the subject is math, science, reading, or English. Great teachers are also great communicators. Besides teaching, there are many other education-related careers.

Careers in education include: teacher (elementary and secondary), school counselor, educational researcher, audiovisual specialist, educational administrator, school/university information specialist, director of college news, director of a collegiate information center, educational tester, development officer, educational fund-raiser, alumni officer, college placement officer, college admissions director, and college recruiter.

Communication subjects that can enhance an education career include: oral communication, public speaking, interpersonal communication, introduction to media systems, communication theory, communication research methods, communication in the classroom, intercultural communication, teaching language arts, linguistics, sociolinguistics, nonverbal communication, small group communication, performance studies, forensics, family communication, conflict resolution, argumentation, communication ethics, rhetorical theory and criticism, listening, persuasion, and communication disorders.

"In my experience, savvy communication professionals are essential to 21st century organizations operating in an era characterized as much by information as misinformation."

Sharee M. Freeman,
Director
Community Relations
Service
U.S. Department of Justice

GOVERNMENT/POLITICS

Communication skills are essential to address and articulate the issues that challenge political leaders and our systems of government. Communication is the basis for gaining understanding between people, discussing similarities and differences, and settling disputes.

Communication and government/political-related careers include: public information officer, speech writer, legislative assistant, campaign director, research specialist, program coordinator, negotiator, lobbyist, press secretary, and elected official.

Communication subjects that can enhance a government career include: public speaking, journalism, interpersonal communication, introduction to media systems, mass communication, communication theory, communication research methods, organizational communication, argumentation and debate, rhetorical theory and criticism, political communication, persuasion, media performance, listening, communication ethics, performance studies, and acting.

"The study of communication has propelled me throughout my career. Today, competent communication – in Congress, with the media, and ultimately the American people – is an integral part of my everyday job."

Rahm Emanuel
U.S. Congressman, Illinois

"In the 21st Century, quality communication is central in our quest to enhance health. Effective communication is necessary in advancing ethical agendas, developing policy, and personally in making appropriate health decisions."

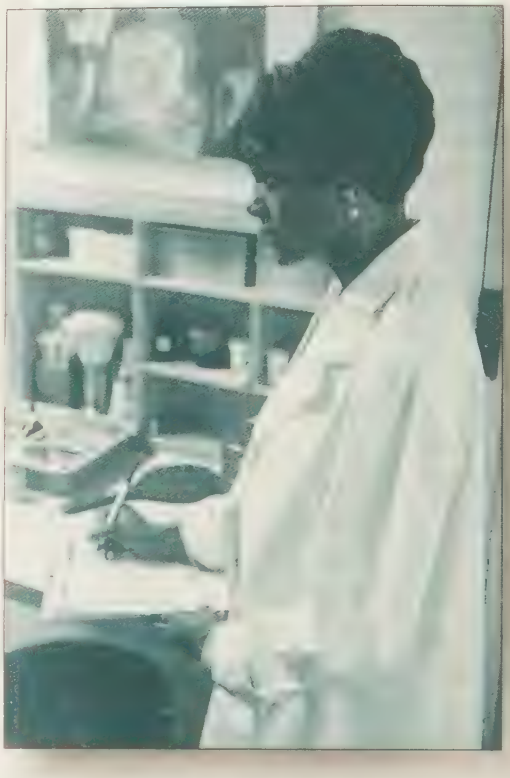
Scott C. Ratzan, M.D., MPA
Vice President,
Government Affairs of
Johnson & Johnson
Editor-in-Chief
Journal of Health
Communication:
International Perspective

"Hardly a day passes in the halls of Congress that I don't draw on the lessons I learned as an undergraduate major in communication – not so much the substance of a specific course but the ability to view the world with a critical and constructive eye."

Richard Gephardt
U.S. Congressman

HEALTH CAREERS

Health care providers must communicate effectively with clients and patients in order to prevent illness, diagnose disease, and manage treatment and patient care. Communication is necessary for developing and maintaining trust between provider and client, their families, and other health care providers.



Equally important in health careers is the use of communication to educate and train a population in behaviors such as nutrition, sexual health, and family planning.

Careers in health and communication include: health educator, school health care administrator, medical grants writer, hospital director of communication, clinic public relations director, health communication analyst, research analyst, medical training supervisor, communications manager for federal health agencies, health personnel educator, medical center publications editor, hospice manager, drug rehabilitationist, health care counselor, activities director, marketing director, and health facility fund raiser.

Communication subjects that can enhance a health career include: health communication, interpersonal communication, family communication, interviewing, business and professional communication, public speaking, research methods, small group discussion, conflict resolution, public relations, listening, nonverbal communication, persuasion, and communication ethics.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND NEGOTIATIONS

International relationships and negotiations are communication-centered. Understanding the effect of internationalism and how it affects communication is fundamental to dealing with others in the world arena. In an increasingly diverse world economy, essential communication skills include problem-solving, speaking, listening, writing, analyzing information, and interacting among multiple and diverse cultures.

Careers in international relations and negotiations include: on-air international broadcasting talent, corporate representative, translator, student tour coordinator, diplomat, foreign relations officer, host/hostess for foreign dignitaries, and foreign correspondent.

Communication subjects that can enhance an international relations/negotiations career include: intercultural communication, international communication, nonverbal communication, public speaking, interpersonal communication, introduction to mass communication, communication theory, language and social interaction, public relations, political communication, and conflict resolution and negotiation.

LAW

Law is a profession that is essentially about communication. It involves establishing meaning and community through language. With a field so steeped in verbal and nonverbal skill requirements, a background in communication can serve as an effective beginning to a career in law. Communication training, or a degree in communication, can be useful for admission to law schools, as well as providing skills for use during and after law school. It is also valuable to paralegals and legal secretaries.

Careers in law and communication include: public defender, corporate lawyer, district attorney, public interest lawyer, private practice lawyer, legal researcher, mediation and negotiation specialist, paralegal researcher, legal secretary, legal reporter, and legal educator.

Communication subjects that can enhance a legal career include: public speaking, interpersonal communication, legal communication, media law, media regulation, argumentation and debate, listening, small group communication, conflict resolution and negotiation, persuasion, interviewing, communication ethics, nonverbal communication, performance studies, and acting.

SOCIAL AND HUMAN SERVICES

Social workers, counselors, and other similar professionals must be effective communicators. The way human services are communicated can affect how people use, evaluate and respond to those services.

Careers in social and human services include: public administrator, social worker, recreational supervisor, human rights officer, community affairs liaison, park service public relations specialist, philanthropic representative, religious leader, and mental counselor.

Communication subjects that can enhance a social services or human services career include: public speaking, business and professional communication, interpersonal communication, introduction to media systems, family communication, discourse analysis, cross-cultural communication, organizational communication, listening, relational communication, small group communication, communication ethics, crisis communication, and nonverbal communication.

TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRIES

The link between computerization and communication has become the subject of extensive research by communication specialists. Many departments of communication offer a specialization in information sciences, human information theory and processes, or in communication technologies, often dealing with communication by computer, compressed video, and teleconferencing.

Careers in technology and communication include: trainer for communication technologies, closed circuit television producer/director, systems analyst, technical copywriter, language specialist, speech synthesizer, cognition researcher, audio and visual computer display specialist, and performance assessor.

Communication subjects that can enhance a high technology career include: oral communication, public speaking, interpersonal communication, introduction to media systems, communication research methods, communication theory, listening, communication ethics, and organizational communication.

Getting a Job in Communication

Your job search should include reading the want ads, visiting the college or university job placement service, listing yourself with an employment agency, and networking with people who may be aware of possible job availabilities. Other suggestions for communication majors include:

- Become a member of the National Communication Association and take advantage of Interfolio, Inc., an on-line credentials management service. Interfolio provides a comprehensive and flexible service for NCA members in the job market. Members can place their credentials in an online file that may include transcripts, writing samples, teaching philosophy, as well as a vita and letters of recommendation. When Interfolio clients indicate membership with NCA, their outgoing files include a cover letter, identifying the applicant as an NCA member. A list of opportunities within the communication field appears in the classified section of Spectra, the monthly NCA newsletter, and up-to-date listings may be found in SpectraOnline, in the Members Area of NCA's website. To learn more about Interfolio, Inc. and its services, visit http://www.natcom.org/Placement/default.htm.
- Obtain internships, part-time jobs, and volunteer positions while you are a student, which often lead to future job placements. These positions often build networks in which you get to know people who hire or know of possible openings. It is strongly recommended that communication majors acquire a position, whether paid or voluntary, which allows for "hands-on" experience in the field.
- Speak with your teachers and your department's instructors about prospective jobs. They often are aware of job opportunities.
- Do informational interviews. Make appointments with people in your field who hold positions similar to your career desires. Ask them to describe the path they followed to obtain their position.
- While studying for your degree, assemble information that will showcase your talents. A portfolio of writing samples, audio and videotapes, and copies of reports and group projects, can all be valuable in displaying your abilities.
- Get to know your professors well enough so that they will be able to write recommendation letters for you that contain personal information.
- When asking anyone to write letters of recommendation, provide them with the documentation they will need to write about you with examples and illustrations. At a minimum, give them a résumé, which lists your school activities, work record, and other information that they may not have about you.

Representative Careers and Salaries in Communication

Are you still wondering about your pathway to career satisfaction and success? Are you still asking yourself: "But what will I do with a communication degree?" Other students may have some answers for you. In a survey of communication graduates, employees identified their first post-graduate job and their present job.[24] The career advancement of these graduates with communication degrees, presented in Table 4, speaks for itself.

TABLE 4

Representative Career Advancement Patterns in Communication

Entry Level Position	Present Position
Marketing Assistant	Owner
Communication Assistant	Manager
Law Clerk	Attorney
CGO Operator	News Director
Administrative Assistant	President
Sales Assistant	Account Executive
Research Associate	Training Specialist
Operations Coordinator	Operations Director
Presentation Manager	Training Manager
Announcer	President
Legislative Aide	Public Information Officer
Legislative Assistant	Contract Administrator
Customer Service Rep	Supervisor
Trainer	Human Resources Manager
Computer Director	Editor-in-Chief
Analyst	Senior Consultant
Junior Copywriter	Senior Copy Writer
Press Secretary	President
Public Affairs Specialist	Chief Speech Writer
Claims Adjuster	Claims Supervisor
Promotional Specialist	Senior Marketing Manager
Assistant	Operations Manager
Instructor	Professor
PR Events Coordinator	Director of Advertising
Meetings Secretary	Visitors Coordinator

Source: Wolvin, A.D.(1998) Careers in communication: An update. Journal of the Association for Communication Administration, 27, pp.71-73.

Are you also wondering how much money you can earn with your communication degree? According to a report of the U.S. Department of Education, presented in Table 5, communication majors are earning more than their counterparts with degrees in comparable areas of study. For example, a bachelor's degree earned in communication and journalism majors have a salary increase of 28% while social work and protective services majors have an increase of only 21%.

TABLE 5

Communication Undergraduate Salaries by Major and Field (1994-1997)

TOTAL	Full-Time 94'	Full-Time 97'	Percent increase in salary if full time in 94' and 97' 24.5%
Bachelor's Degree Major			
Communication/ Journalism	$22,170	$32,294	28.7%
Education	$20,443	$24,543	18.2%
Social Work/Protective Services	$21, 328	$27, 350	21.7%
Academic Fields			
Humanities and Arts	$22,359	$29,630	25.6%
Biological/Interdisciplinary Sciences	$25,380	$28,760	22.4%
Mathematic/Physical Sciences	$25,958	$31,565	23.6%
Social Sciences	$23,166	$33,463	26.8%
Other*	$24,694	$33,374	23.4%

*Other includes agriculture, natural resources, forestry textiles, home economics, law, library science, science, leisure studies, basic/personal skills, industrial arts, precision production, and transportation.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992-93 Baccalaureate Longitudinal study, Second Follow-up (B&B:1993-1997), Data Analysis System

RESOURCES FOR INVESTIGATING COMMUNICATION STUDIES

Electronic Resources

National Communication Association (NCA) at www.natcom.org

Under Communication Programs at **http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cool** on the NCA web site, information is available to help students in their search for a communication program at any level of study. Links are provided to communication departments at most colleges and universities across the country.

A Directory of Graduate Programs at **https://www.natcom.org/ComProg/GPDHTM/graduate directory.htm** provides descriptions and links to institutions offering graduate education. The directory is organized by state and concentration within the communication discipline. Also, the results of a ranking study of Ph.D. programs in communication are presented that measure the reputations of doctoral programs and offer a listing of the top-ranked schools.

Communication Ring/Rhetoric Resources at http://rhetorical.info

A communication ring is a group of communication sites that are linked together. You can move from one communication site to the next with ease. It offers links to sites such as professional organizations (i.e., NCA), references, projects, link collections and hubs and discussions.

Communication Research and Theory Net (CRTNET) at crtnet@natcom.org.

CRTNET is a daily electronic newsletter with over 4000 subscribers moderated by the National Communication Association. Communication scholars and students may post queries about communication topics, job announcements, grants and fellowships, and may hold discussions on important topics. You may subscribe to CRTNET by following the instructions provided on the NCA Home Page.

Broadcast Education Association (BEA) at www.beaweb.org

BEA provides a Directory of Colleges and Universities that outlines degrees in broadcasting and electronic media. In addition, you will find information on scholarships for college students, industry jobs through state broadcast associations, convention and exhibit information, and related scholarly journals.

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) at www.nces.ed.gov

This website provides comprehensive, annual, national statistics concerning elementary, secondary, and postsecondary schools. It is the primary federal collection database for collecting information, research, tables and charts related to education.

Directories and Associations of Communication Programs

Directory of Communication Programs. National Communication Association, Washington, DC. A directory of NCA members and member communication departments. Available on the NCA Members Only area of the NCA website at www.natcom.org.

Journalism and Mass Communication Directory. Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Columbia, SC.

A list of journalism and mass communication departments and descriptive information about their programs.

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